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NSC BRIEFING

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JAPANESE UPPER HOUSE ELECTIONS

- I. The Japanese Upper House elections on 2 June did not result in any major shift in the position of the two major parties.
 - A. Both the ruling Liberal-Democrats and the Socialists gained a few seats--at the expense of the Independents.
 - B. The Socialists, with 85 seats in the 250-seat house, maintain their capability to block any amendment of the constitution's anti-rearmament clause. Such amendment requires a two-thirds majority.
- II. The results can, nevertheless, be considered a moral victory for the Kishi-administration.
 - A. The steady downward trend of the Conservatives during the past decade has been arrested.
 - B. The Socialist popular vote, as compared with the 1956 Upper House elections, dropped from 38 percent to 34 percent, while the Liberal-Democrats rose from 48 percent to 52 percent.
 - C. The results also suggest voter approval of Kishi's pro-US policies, which was a major issue in the campaign.
- III. Kishi's position will be substantially improved within his own party.
 - A. However, he faces another immediate hurdle--the formation of a new cabinet.
 - B. It is not yet certain whether the dissident conservative leaders, such as Ikeda and Niki, will participate in the cabinet.
 - C. Unless they do, we cannot expect the firm, effective government that characterized the early part of Kishi's tenure.

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW